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ABSTRACT

Developed for a high school quinmester unit on the romantic hero, this guide contains teaching strategies for a study of the characteristics of the romantic hero as he appears in various literary selections. Several major literary works are analyzed and discussed in comparison with popular culture heroes, and the portrayal of the romantic hero in the literature of western cultures is traced from the Greek culture to the present. The subject matter includes an identification of the elements of the romantic hero, the problems raised by the romantic hero, and the effects of the romantic hero on the individual today. The guide is arranged according to performance objectives, with appropriate teaching strategies listed under each objective. A list of student and teacher resources (state-adopted textbooks and references) is provided. (RB)

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Romantic Hero

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COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE: ROMANTIC HERO
5113.92 5114.165 5115.180 5116.187	COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the characteristics of the romantic hero as he appears in various literary selections--Cyrano de Bergerac, Don Juan, The Count of Monte Cristo, Three Musketeers, Don Quixote, Frank Yerby novels and C.S. Forester novels.

I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

A. Having identified the elements of romanticism, students will trace the portrayal of the romantic hero in the literature of several cultures.

B. Having had experiences with the romantic hero in literature, students will cite examples of this prototype in other areas of human endeavor.

C. Having immersed themselves in the romantic viewpoint, students will reverse their stance to obtain the contra-view of the debunkers of romanticism.

II. COURSE CONTENT

A. Rationale

A vital human type that has persisted in Western life and literature is the subject of this course of study. The romantic hero, the hero in a fallen world, the tilter against windmills, the challenger and defier of the fates, seems to express the essence of the Western outlook. What are the characteristics of this romantic hero? Why has he so persistently captivated the imaginations of writers of different lands? What glorious opportunities has he opened for the human race? What profound problems has he raised? Where has the ideal of the romantic hero led us? In what ways does it affect us today? What is its probable future? These and other questions similarly related to our culture will be explored in this course.

B. Range of subject matter

1. Elements of romanticism

2. The romantic hero in literature

3. The romantic hero in the arts, history, politics, sports, the communication media

4. Debunkers of romanticism

5. Current status of romanticism

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. Having identified the elements of romanticism, students will trace the portrayal of the romantic hero in the literature of several cultures.

1. Conduct a general unstructured discussion to determine the students' preconceptions of the meaning of romanticism.

2. Take students to the library to investigate the romantic movement. During a class discussion following this, have students identify elements which typify the movement, its heroes, and its manifestations. Several common elements follow:

   a. Love of nature
   b. Supremacy of feeling over thought
   c. Stress on the individual against society
   d. Belief in the innate goodness of man (positive)
   e. Fascination with mysticism
   f. Emulation of medieval forms and interests

3. Give students a list of real or fictitious people. Ask them to apply the elements of romanticism they have discovered in #2 above.

   a. Superman
   b. Tarzan
   c. John F. Kennedy
   d. Moishe Dayan
   e. David
   f. Daniel Boone
   g. Romeo
   h. Martin Luther King
   i. Cassius Clay
   j. Joe Namath

k. Joe Mannix
l. Matt Dillon
m. Dan Cartwright
n. Odysseus
o. Marco Polo
p. Huck Finn
q. James Bond
r. Count of Monte Cristo
s. Don Quixote
t. Winston Churchill
u. Fidel Castro
v. Adolph Hitler
w. Charles de Gaulle
x. Charles Lindbergh
y. John Glenn
z. Paul Newman
aa. Robin Hood
bb. El Cid

4. Give students a variety of words and/or phrases which characterize the Romantic mode:

a. Revival of chivalry
b. "Liberalism in literature"(Hugo)
c. Deism
d. Optimistic wonder and mystery
e. Revolt against established forms and customs
f. Individualism
g. Idealization of nature
h. Freedom of imagination

Discuss each of these with students and have them read and/or recall literary selection which exemplify one or more of these modal elements.

a. Myths

(1) "Prometheus and Io"
(2) "Tantalus and Niobe"
(3) "Flower-Myths: Narcissus, Hyacinth, Adonis"
(4) "Demeter"
(5) "Dionysus"
(6) "Cupid and Psyche"
(7) "Pygmalion and Galatea"

b. Biblical stories and characte.s

(1) Ruth and Naomi
(2) Moses and the Promised Land
(3) David and Goliath
(4) Esther
(5) Samson and Delilah
(6) Job
(7) Adam and Eve
(8) Isaiah
(9) Daniel
(10) Joseph

c. Ancient heroes

(1) Aeneas
(2) Odysseus
(3) Beowulf
(4) Siegfried
(5) King Arthur
(6) Roland

Instruct students to select one from each group to include in a paper which explores the expression of romanticism.

5. Have students trace the romantic hero in time. Give them a representative selection of heroes from ancient times to the present who embody romantic characteristics. Examples might be the Prometheus of Aeschylus and Shelley, Sophocles' Antigone, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Byron's Don Juan, and Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby.

6. Have students trace the romantic hero in American, English, French and other literatures. Make small group assignments in which each student specializes in a single author or work in close collaboration with other students working in the same national literature. The aim is for clear and comprehensive reports from each committee to the class.

a. English committee

(1) Novels of Sir Walter Scott — Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, Waverly

(2) The Brontë novels — Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre
(3) Poetry of Byron, Keats and the other Romantics

b. American committee

(1) Essays of Emerson and Thoreau
(2) Poetry of Poe and Whitman
(3) Novels of James Fenimore Cooper
  (a) Deerslayer
  (b) Last of the Mohicans
  (c) Pathfinder
(4) F. Scott Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby
(5) Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

c. French committee

(1) Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary
(2) Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond de Rostand
(3) Novels of Victor Hugo — The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Les Miserables
(4) Novels of Alexandre Dumas — The Count of Monte Cristo, The Three Musketeers

d. German committee

(1) Goethe's Sorrows of Young Werther and Faust
(2) Novels of Hermann Hesse— Siddhartha, Steppenwolf
(3) Thomas Mann's Adventures of Felix Krull

e. Russian committee

(1) Pushkin's Eugene Onegin
(2) Turgenev's Fathers and Sons, The Hunting Sketches
(3) Notes from the Underground by F. Dostoyevsky

Students might present their reports via one of the following:

a. Symposium
b. Mural depicting the combined characteristics of national heroes accompanied by a lecture
c. Visual portrayal of symbols used
d. Skit
e. Readers Theatre

7. Ask students to select a specific literary genre and identify the ways in which the different literary forms have presented the romantic ideals.

   a. Novels

      (1) Flaubert's Madame Bovary
      (2) Cervantes' Don Quixote
      (3) Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Sorrows of Young Werther
      (4) Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby

   b. Plays

      (1) Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac
      (2) Shaw's Man and Superman

   c. Poetry

      (1) Byron's Don Juan
      (2) Goethe's Faust
      (3) Keats' The Eve of St. Agnes

8. Have students read and discuss ancient romantic works, i.e., Prometheus Bound, Antigone, Medea, The Iliad, and/or The Odyssey. Have them distinguish clearly between romantic and nonromantic elements in these works.

9. Have students read and discuss a romantic work of the medieval or renaissance period, i.e., Morte d' Arthur, Don Quixote, Hamlet, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Romance of the Rose, and/or folk ballads (Robin Hood).

10. Have students read and discuss a romantic modern work, i.e., Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, Ellison's The Invisible Man, Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March, and/or Thomas Mann's The Confessions of Felix Krull.

11. Have each student elect to read an exemplary romantic work and present his reaction to the class from an imaginative and romantic stance. Sample class activities are provided as insight keys to each work.

a. Cyrano de Bergerac (Edmond Rostand)

(1) Have students, after having read Cyrano de Bergerac, compare its presentation of historical elements with those from history itself. What was the Paris of 1640 overshadowed by Richelieu really like. Suggest that students conduct a verbal walking tour through its streets, into a literary salon, or that they describe a day at court,or attend a play at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Some students might compare the fictitious Cyrano with the real one.

(2) Ask each student to imagine himself a fellow cadet alongside Christian in Cyrano's company. What does Christian tell him as a confidante?

(3) Have students imagine themselves either Christian during the seige of Anas or Roxanne living in a convent near Paris after Christian's death. Students are to keep a diary of thoughts and descriptions of daily events for whichever character they choose.

(4) Direct students' attention to Cyrano's words at the end of the play:

"But a man does not fight merely to win!
No — no — better to know one fights in vain!...
I know them now, my ancient enemies —
Falsehood!... Prejudice —
Compromise —
Cowardice — ...
Ah, you too, Vanity!...
One thing without stain,
Unspotted from the world, in spite of doom
my own! — ...
my white plume..."

Have students explain, using examples from the play and from other romantic tales, the manner in which these lines characterize the swashbuckling romantic hero.

b. Don Juan (George Gordon, Lord Byron)

(1) Divide students, after they have read Don Juan, into eight groups to read the interpretations in Part One of Twentieth Century Interpretations of Don Juan. Assign one interpretive essay to each group. Have them read the essay and then take a stand on the points made by the author. Following these small group discussions, have one or more students from each group present an overview of their consensus.

(2) Give students a topic such as "Don Juan: The Incarnate Lord Byron." Have them reject or support this idea, using specifics from the life of each.

(3) Have students itemize the allusions invoked by calling someone today a Don Juan.

(4) Have students, as they read, note historical, literary, and cultural allusions. What expressions have now become clichés: "Stranger than fiction," "Sweet Adeline," "But words are things."

(5) Present students with a pastiche of phrases such as the following:

(a) A kaleidoscopic panorama
(b) Regard for the classical
(c) Eloquent praise and insults
(d) Incisive satire
(e) Onslaught of impressions

Have them relate specific instances from the poem to exemplify each.

c. Count of Monte Cristo, The (Alexandre Dumas)

(1) Have students contrast the lives and works of two prolific Black writers, Frank Yerby and Alexandre Dumas. Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo and Yerby's Foxes of Harrow, The Devil's Laughter, or The Saracen Blade might provide a basis for analyzing the romanticism in their novels.

(2) Ask students to rate Alexandre Dumas as a storyteller. Why do his novels, such as The Three Musketeers and The Count of Monte Cristo, rate high on the cloak-and-dagger scale and adapt into successful box-office films?

(3) Have three students volunteer to present the triad of Edmond Dantès. How could each Edmond - the betrothed young man; the falsely accused inmate of Château d'If; the wily avenger of the court - ascribe to his philosophic statement, "All human wisdom is contained in the words 'Wait and hope!'"

d. Three Musketeers, The (Alexandre Dumas)

(1) Have students research the exploits of General Dumas in service to Napoleon as the archetype of Porthos in The Three Musketeers.

(2) Have students assess the significance of the number three in the lives and escapades of D'Artagnan and his friends, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis.

(3) Ask the boys in class to write satiric letters to girl-friends who expect them to be swashbuckling heroes à la Musketeers.

(4) Have the girls role-play a "hen" party with two groups of participants: women's lib advocates and pussycats. The issue concerns banishment of The Three Musketeers from school and public libraries.

e. Don Quixote (Miguel de Saavedra Cervantes)

(1) Have students investigate evidence of illusion and reality. What does Don Quixote conclude about reality?

(2) Ask students to note the failures and defeats which Don Quixote suffers. What does each reveal about its cause? Is Cervantes indicting Don Quixote's failure or the force which caused him to fail?

(3) Have students chronicle the romantic characteristics in Don Quixote.

(4) Have students, as they ride with Don Quixote, study the cross-section of humanity they meet along the way. Which ones have universal qualities? What do these people reveal of the life and conditions in Spain?

(5) Ask students who have seen Man of La Mancha to compare and contrast it with the novel.

(6) Give students the word quixotic and have them write an etymology of it using examples from the novel.

(7) Refer students to Sancho Panza's discovery of the idea that once a goal is envisioned, man cannot be content with anything less. Have them suggest other individuals who have had an impossible dream and be prepared to recount how they pursued it. Students might also be encouraged to write a personal essay on the subject.

f. Lord Hornblower (C.S. Forester)

(1) Ask students, after reading, to research the extent to which the fictional Horatio Hornblower resembles his creator, C. S. Forester.

(2) Have students discuss the romantic quirk that is revealed by Horatio's decision to retain his rather grotesque surname in his new appellation: Peer of the Realm, a Baron of the United Kingdom, Lord Hornblower of Smallbridge, County of Kent.

(3) Ask students to evaluate the impact of the Wellingtons, the Bonapartes, and the Bourbons in adding glamor and imaginative life to Horatio's adventures.

(4) Have students determine the contributions of the elements of romanticism to escape fiction. Suggest that students cast the characters of Lord Hornblower for a Hollywood film.

B. Having had experiences with the romantic hero in literature, students will cite examples of this prototype in other areas of human endeavor.

1. Have students distinguish romantic elements in a number of paintings. Show slides of these or project prints in books on an opaque.

a. Constable, John: "Wivenhoe Park, Essex"; "Willy Lott's House, Near Flatford Mill"; "Salisbury Cathedral"; "The Haywain"; "The Jumping Horse"
b. Corot, Jean-Baptiste: "The Bauhante"; "Melancholy"
c. Delacroix, Eugene: "Dante and Vergil"; "Lion Hunt"; "Medea"; "The Bark of Dante"; "Women of Algiers"; "Liberty Leading the People"
d. Hughes, Arthur: "April Love"
e. Morland, George: "Peasants and Horses near an Inn"
f. Morris, William (craftsman and designer): wallpaper, tapestries, carpet, furniture
g. Rossetti, Dante Gabriel: "Self-portrait"
h. Rousseau, Theodore: "A Clearing in the Woods at Fountainebleau"; "The Waterfall"
i. Turner, J.M.W.: "The Slave Ship"; "The Approach to Venice: Sunset"; "Burning of the Houses of Parliament"; "Shipping at Corals"; "Sunsets"
j. Whistler, James McNeill: "Harmony in Grey and Green"; "Nocturne in Blue and Green"; "Old Battersea Bridge"

2. Show students art slides illustrating classical and romantic contrasts in Poussin and Turner, David and Delacroix.

3. Have students listen to musical compositions and identify romantic elements.

   a. Tchaikowsky's "Francesco di Rimini Overture," Eugene Onegin (opera), "1812 Overture"
   b. Beethoven's "Third," "Fifth," and "Ninth" symphonies, incidental music for "Egmont," and "Fidelio" (opera)
   c. Wagner's Tristan and Isolde, Tannhauser, Die Meistersinger, Parsifal
   d. Verdi's La Traviata, IlTrovatore, Aida, Rigoletto, The Masked Ball

4. Have students contrast the music of Haydn and Beethoven, Mozart and Mahler, Bach and Brahms. Which one in each group exhibits romantic qualities?

5. Give students names of romantic heroes in history and politics. Have them suggest others. Ask students to role-play one incident in the life of one individual.

   a. Christopher Columbus, John Glenn, Einstein and other explorers and scientists
   b. Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Hitler, McGovern, and other "romantic" remakers of the earth
   c. Kropotkin, Lenin, Emma Goldman, Sacco and Vanzetti, and other anarchist romantics
   d. Ralph Nader, Upton Sinclair, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Lincoln Steffens as crusading romantics

6. Have students locate romantic heroes in contemporary life. The following areas may serve as departure points for discussion and/or study.

   a. Hippie communes (Charles Reich's The Greening of America)
   b. Pop music scene
   c. Drug cult
   d. Magic/mystic cult
   e. Ecological back-to-nature movement
   f. Astrology
   g. Zero population groups
   h. Anti-vivisection groups
   i. Poor People's Coalition
   j. Jet set

7. Have a class discussion of films depicting famous romantic movie heroes and heroines, i.e., Errol Flynn, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. and Jr., Sean Connery, Vivian Leigh, Clark Gable, Marlon Brando, Charlie Chaplin, Katherine Hepburn. What characteristics of the romantic tradition are fulfilled by films such as:

   a. The Adventures of Robin Hood
   b. James Bond films (To Russia With Love, Dr. No, Goldfinger, Thunderball)
   c. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
   d. The Graduate
   e. Easy Rider
   f. The Mephisto Waltz
   g. Rosemary's Baby
   h. Love Story

8. Have students watch at least five television series which depict romantic heroes, i.e., Ironside, Mannix, To Catch a Thief, Mission Impossible, The Name of the Game. Have a class discussion on such questions as:

   a. Ironside: What extra qualities of heroism does the wheelchair add to the chief?
   b. Mannix: How does Joe resemble D'Artagnan?
   c. The Name of the Game: What is the appeal of the rich swashbuckling hero?
   d. To Catch a Thief: Why is such a rogue likable?
   e. Mission Impossible: What is the impossible dream?

9. Have students compile individual lists of modern romantic heroes in the sports arena and discuss these lists with other students in small groups. Select the ten most popular sports figures for class homage.

10. Ask the student to examine himself and his peers to discover the effect of romanticism on their thinking and acting. He should synthesize his conclusions in a written paper.

C. Having immersed themselves in the romantic viewpoint, students will reverse their stance to obtain the contra-view of the debunkers of romanticism.

   1. Have the students bring to class copies of Mad for a satirical search. What institutions or customs are ridiculed? Is satire a legitimate weapon for debunking?

2. Ask students to ponder the historical accuracy of accepted "truths" concerning famous people or events. Have those who accept these "truths" look for evidence to bolster or refute their beliefs.

   Davy Crockett killed a bear at age three.
   George Washington chopped down the famous cherry tree.
   The United States won most of its battles in the War of 1812.
   The Indians initiated scalping rites.
   Columbus discovered America.

3. Have students investigate Dr. Bowdler's version of Shakespeare's works. In what way do we immortalize Dr. Bowdler?

4. Have students discuss the pros and cons of debunking romanticism to explore its weaknesses, excesses, and omissions. Ask students to examine works that debunk romanticism in order to get the broadest perspective possible.

   a. Arms and the Man
   b. Babbitt
   c. Candide
   d. Gulliver's Travels
   e. "Get Smart"
   f. The Pink Panther
   g. "The Wild, Wild West"
   h. Three-Penny Opera

5. Have students comment on Pierre Boyle's thesis: assuming that all the legends about Helen of Troy are true then Helen must have been sixty, probably one hundred years of age at the time of the Trojan War. Would she have been a prize worth fighting for?

6. Have students read and discuss a work with an antiheroic protagonist, i.e., Notes from the Underground, The Zoo Story, Catcher in the Rye, Catch 22. How is the antihero a descendent of the romantic hero? Have students cite their common characteristics: individualism, defiance of society, suspicion of rationality and experimental attitude toward morality.

7. Form triads of students to discuss the contributions of the epic hero, the romantic hero, and the antihero to our view of humanity.

8. Have students, after having studied the assets and liabilities of romanticism, formulate a statement of their own accepting or repudiating its tenets as applicable to the contemporary world. Have them also take a stand on its future.

IV. STUDENT AND TEACHER RESOURCES

A. State-adopted textbooks

Patterns of Literature 1: The Short Story
Unit One - Ancient Prose Narratives
Unit Two - Medieval Prose Narratives

Outlooks through Literature
Romeo and Juliet
"Classical Heritage"

England in Literature
"Beowulf - an Anglo-Saxon Epic"

Insights: Themes in Literature
"The Odyssey"

English Literature
"The Middle English Period"
"From Gulliver's Travels"

The English Tradition: Drama
Arms and the Man, George Bernard Shaw

Major British Writers
The Tragedy of Hamlet
Gulliver's Travels

Compass Points
"The Surprising Adventure of Don Quixote of La Mancha"

Western Literature: Themes and Writers
Antigone

Adventures in English Literature
"Morte d'Arthur"
Gulliver's Travels
"From Don Juan," Byron

The English Tradition: Fiction
"The Precursors"

Insight: The Experience of Literature
Cyrano de Bergerac, Edmond Rostand
"The Iliad"
"The Story of Moses"
"The Song of Roland"
"The Cid"

B. Supplementary materials

1. Non-state-adopted textbooks

Man in Literature, Scott Foresman
"The Woman Scorned"

Patterns of Literature, L.W. Singer Co.
Antigone
"Iliad"
"Odyssey"
Hamilton selections in mythology
"How Siegfried Fought with the Saxons"
"The Song of Roland"
"How The Cid Won His Knighthood"
"The Terrifying Adventure of Don Quixote"

Insight: English Literature
Oedipus
Wuthering Heights
"Beowulf"

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